(c) and (d) Government are aware of collaboration between Pakistan and China in a number of defence related projects including that relating to the development of a Main Battle Tank MBT 2000 (Al Khalid). Government have highlighted, in bilateral and multilateral fora, its concern at the continuing supply by China of sophisticated weapons and related technology to Pakistan beyond its legitimate requirements. Government have made it clear that this poses a threat to India's security and is not conducive to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region. Government have been taking necessary steps to safeguard the security and national interest and will continue to do so in keeping with its assessment of developments pertaining to India's security environment.

Fake travel and telephone bills in ICCR

2500. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA':
SHRI S. MUTHU MANI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of a major racket in fake travel and telephone bills in the ICCR;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have taken any steps to fix responsibility in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): (a) No, Sir. There is no such "racket in fake travel or telephone bills" in the ICCR. The Council's accounts are audited every year by the Comptroller & Auditor General of India and such irregularities have not been indicated by them. Additionally the latest report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs of Parliament which went into the working of the ICCR in considerable details has no reference to such a racket in Travel and Telephone bills.

(b) Not applicable.

(c) Not applicable.

(d) Not applicable.

(e) Question does not arise.

Indo-Bhutan bilateral ties

2501. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the areas in which India and Bhutan have established bilateral ties;

(b) whether any joint agreement has been signed by both the countries in the purpose; and

(c) the steps taken to establish Indo-Bhutan ties in the areas of common interest to both the countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERWANI): (a) The basic framework of bilateral relations between India and Bhutan is the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed between the two countries in 1949. Bilateral economic cooperation has been established between India and Bhutan in the areas of hydel power, geological exploration, technical cooperation, airport construction, road construction, electricity distribution, mining, health, education and telecommunication. India is the principal donor of aid for the economic development of Bhutan.

(b) The India-Bhutan Trade and Commerce Agreement was renewed in February 1995 and is effective for a five year period from March 1995. Other Agreements signed between the two countries include those relating to (1) implementation of the Jaldhaka Hydro-electric Project in September 1961; (2) exchange of Postal parcels in December in 1968; (3) Chukha Hydro-electric Project

March 1974; (4) Air Services in September 1991; (5) Standby credit to the Royal Government of Bhutan in March 1993, and (6) Indo-Bhutan Survey Collooorat.on Projects in March 1996.

Agreements have also been signed between the two countries in respect of the following major projects being currently set up in Bhutan:—

(i) Tala Hydro-electric Project (1020 MW): A bilateral Agreement for thhis Project between Government of India and Government of Bhutan was signed in March 1996.

(ii) Kurichu Hydro-electric Project (45 MW): The bilateral Agreement for this Project was signed in February 1994.

(iii) Dungsum Cement Plant (capacity 0.5 million tons per year). The Bilateral Agreement for the setting up of the Dungsum cement plant was signed in March 1996.

(c) India enjoys a close and trouble free relationship with Bhutan characterised by regular exchanges of visits at various levels and economic corporation in a wide range of sectors, to mutual benefit.

Possibilities of India becoming a permanent member of Security Council

2502. SHRI TARA CHARAN MAJUMDAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether possibilities of India's efforts to become a permanent member of the all-powerful Security Council at the forthcoming session of the United Nations General Assembly, to be held in September, 1997 are certain;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to adopt all possible strategies to tackle conspiring moves of our neighbours and other member countries of U.N.O.; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): (a) to (d) Discussions on UN Security Council reform, including the expansion in the number of permanent and non-permanent members, are continuing. The mandate of the Open Ended Working Group set up by the UN General Assembly has been extended by another year, so as to enable, it to submit its report, including "any agreed recommendations" by the end of the 52nd Session of the UN General Assembly. The Government keeps the situation under constant review, taking into account the positions adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement, the various other proposals under consideration and the evolving scenario. We have underscored the need for a non-discriminatory approach in the selection of new permanent members and adoption of global criteria for their selection.

India's Representation in Security Council

2503. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Security Council proposes to elect five Permanent Members, with a view to broadening the representation of the developing world;

(b) whether India is one of the strongest nations in the developing world; and

(c) if so, the efforts made by the Government to represent Asia in the Security Council as a Permanent Member?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): (a) to (c) Discussions on UN Security Council reform, including the expansion in the number of permanent and non-permanent members are continuing. A number of proposals are under consideration, the